

Meeting Summary

Following is a summary of the issues discussed at the Department of Human Resources (DHR) Stat meeting on March 11, 2014. Analysis is provided by StateStat.

Strategic Goal: Ending Childhood Hunger in Maryland by 2015

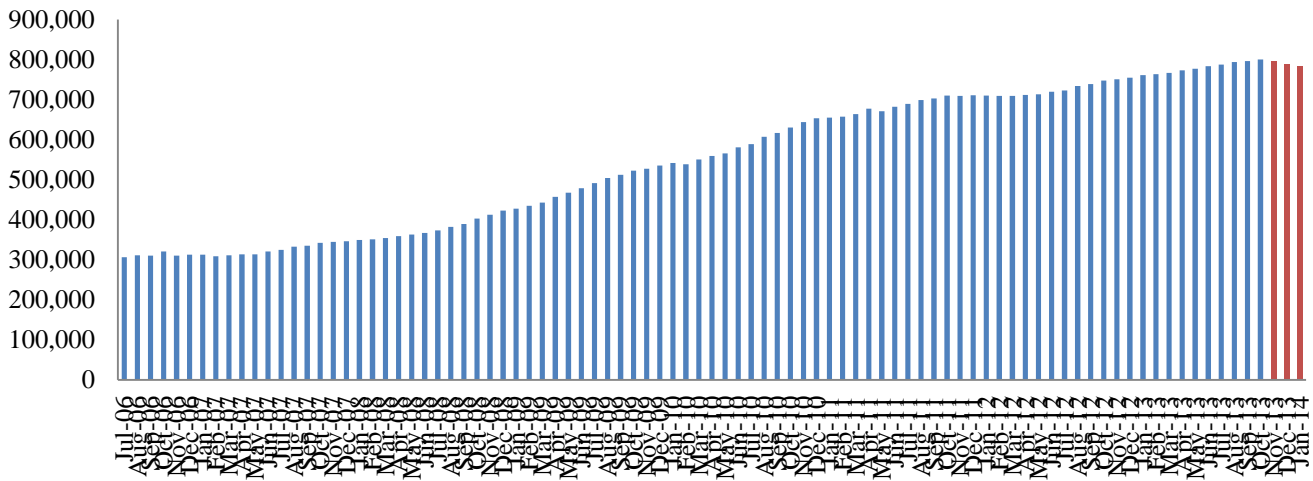
- **Why Does Maryland Not Participate in “Heat and Eat”?** According to recent articles in [Governing Magazine](#) and [Washington Post](#), in response to the recent \$8 billion cut to federal food assistance in this year’s Farm bill, some states are mitigating the cuts by expanding their “heat and eat” spending. “Heat and eat” is a provision by which states automatically qualify families for higher food stamp benefits if they receive heating assistance. 16 states and Washington DC currently participate in “heat and eat,” but Maryland is not one of them.

The Farm Bill created a provision requiring states to give at least \$20 in heating assistance before households can qualify for a higher food stamp benefit. States could previously provide heating assistance as low as \$1 in order to qualify for food assistance. As a result, states such as Connecticut and New York have increased their heating assistance spending to ensure families retain their food assistance benefits. Connecticut increased state energy aid for 500,000 Connecticut residents from \$1 to \$20 to help them cross the new threshold, preserving \$67 million in food assistance for the state, while New York increased heating assistance by \$6 million to preserve \$457 million in food assistance.

DHR states that Maryland is able to cover beneficiaries in other ways and heat and eat would not be beneficial for the state. However, DHR will provide follow-up data to StateStat showing how heat and eat would affect benefit programs.

- **The Total Number of Food Stamp Recipients in the State is Declining Over a Three Month Period for the First Time Since Tracking Began in July 2006.** For the first time since the start of FY07 (when tracking by StateStat began), the total number of food stamp recipients has declined over a three month period (Nov.13, Dec. 13, and Jan. 14). DHR states that they do not believe that three months is a trend as the data may rise at any time.

Total Food Stamp Recipients, FY07-FY14TD

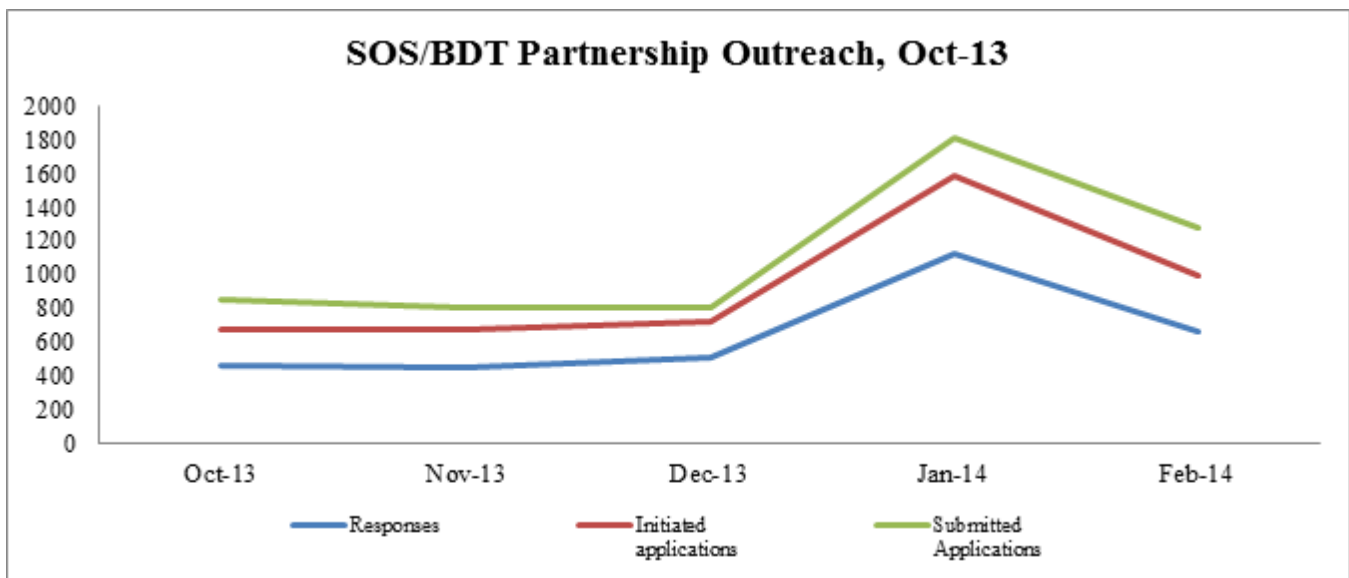
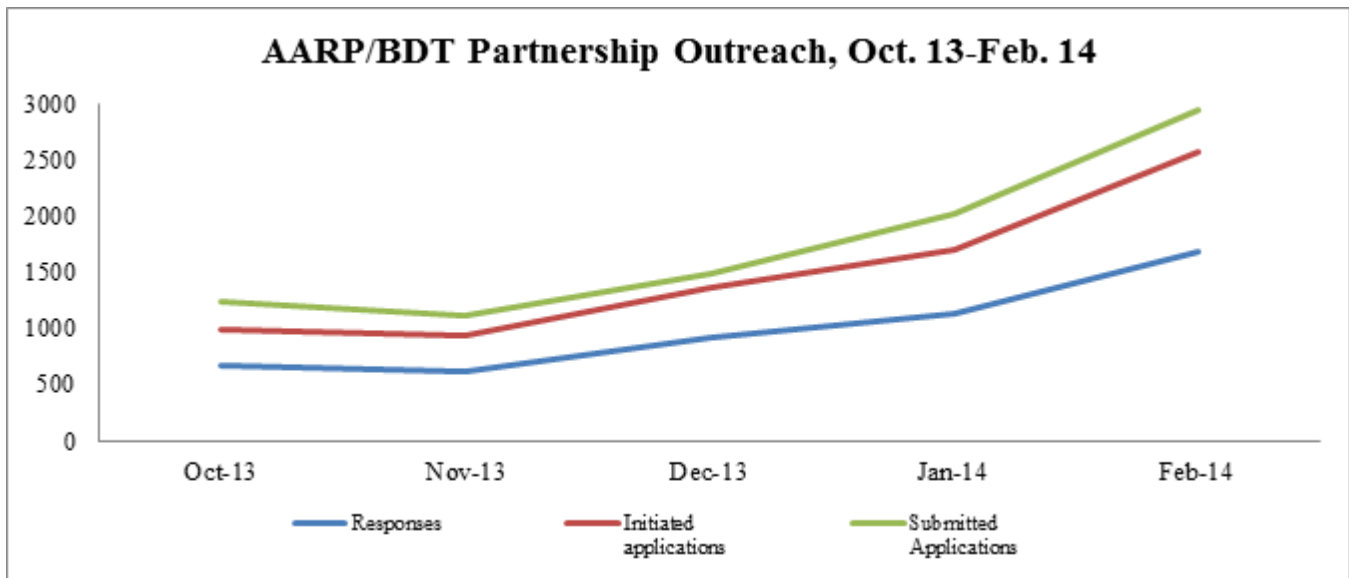


- Benefits Data Trust (BDT) SNAP Outreach.** Using data matching, DHR has identified 13,000 households with seniors and 17,500 households with minor dependents that are enrolled in the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), but not SNAP/FSP. Because the income eligibility threshold for MEAP is below the threshold for SNAP, there is a good chance these households may be eligible for food assistance. As a result, DHR has been working on the Benefits Data Trust program so these eligible individuals can be matched to SNAP services. AARP and Share our Strength (SOS) are assisting DHR with outreach.

DHR has been providing an outreach summary to StateStat as well as response rates from the work being done by the AARP and Share our Strength. DHR reports that an increase in mail in January led to a higher volume of contacts with potential clients. In addition, due to a higher volume of initiated applications in February, BDT expects to see increases in clients being connected to services, in reference to the AARP data. It should be noted that the February SOS data shows declines, though, due to limited outreach.

As a follow-up item, DHR was asked if an increase of clients, coming in due to BDT outreach, would be a strain to local offices in terms of workload. DHR reports that they are confident that their offices can handle any increases.

OUTREACH SUMMARY 8/8/13-2/14/14							
TYPE	TOTAL OUTREACH*	TOTAL CONTACTS	RESPONSE/ CONTACT RATE	APPLICATIONS INITIATED	INITIATED RATE OF CONTACTS	APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED	SUBMITTED RATE OF INITIATED
OB CALLS	16,446	4,606	28%	1,546	34%	915	59%
MAILINGS	98,793	18,473	23% **	10,257	56%	5,963	58%
REFERRALS	-	662	-	295	45%	191	65%
TOTALS	115,239	23,741	21%	12,098	51%	7,069	58%

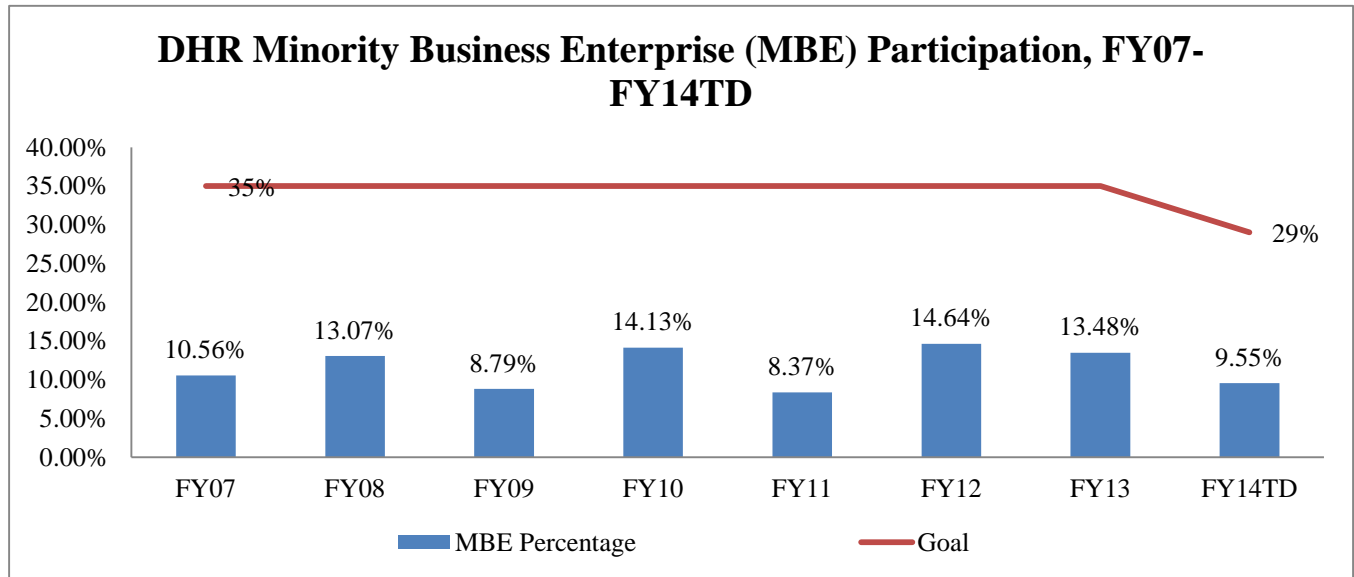


Minority Business Enterprise

- An Update on DHR's MBE Participation in FY14 to Date.** DHR reports 9.55 percent MBE participation through the month of December 2013. It appears to be an accurate reflection of their first six months of FY 2014 procurement/MBE activity. However the most recent report submitted through January shows a dramatic decrease in MBE achievement to 1.74 percent. A review by the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs (GOMA) indicates that several categories of total procurement volume decreased from December to January (Services, Human Services, Credit Card) and others increased dramatically (Direct Voucher).

As mentioned during the previous quarter, GOMA met with all of the human services agencies last summer to talk about ways to maximize MBE participation leading up to the removal of non-profits from the MBE Program. The strategies agreed upon were as follows:

- 1) Designate more procurements for SBR;
- 2) Ensure that total overall procurement awards (denominator) and total MBE awards (numerator) are not being over or under-reported;
- 3) Develop and distribute lists of professional services MBEs to agency end users and P-card holders.



Legislative Update

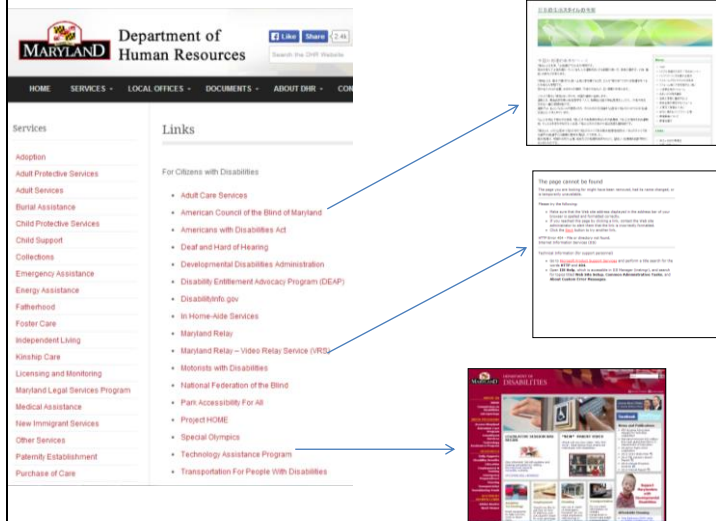
- **Legislation Related to DHR.** The table below shows a list of impending child welfare legislation as a part of the current general session.

Child Welfare Legislation (2014)		
Bill#	Bill	Info
HB1270/SB914	Protecting the Resources of Children in State Custody	Requires that foster youth's federal benefits be used for supplemental services or be placed into a bank account for wards when they age-out of care rather than continuing the practice of taking the money to reimburse the state for the cost of their placement.
HB794/SB794	Maryland Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Young Adult Count	Requires the Department of Planning to select a coordinating entity to oversee the Maryland Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Young Adult Count Demonstration Project.
HB1344	Task Force on Preventing Child Sex Abuse	Creates a task force to make recommendations for how to better prevent, identify, and train children and adults about child sex abuse.
HB1053/SB210	Failure to Report- Penalties and Task Force	Creates penalties for knowing and willfully failing to report child abuse and creates a comprehensive task force to study the issues around report child abuse and neglect including training for mandated reporters.
HB315/SB396	Immigrant Children – Custody or Guardianship Petitions	Expands court jurisdiction to young people who are 18-20 to allow the court to make the factual findings required for that person to apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, for undocumented young people who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned.
SB607	Child Abuse and Neglect – Failure to Report and Training	Creates licensure consequences for mandatory reporters who fail to report child abuse and neglect; requires training for reporters to increase their ability to identify incidents of abuse and neglect.
HB1/SB64	Children in Need of Assistance—Education Stability	Requires the juvenile court to inquire on the educational stability and educational plan of a foster child at specified hearings and proceedings.
HB178	Adoption, Search, Contact and Reunion Services—Relatives of Minors in Out-of-Home Placement	Expands search, contact, and reunion services to include contacting specified relatives of a minor in out-of-home placement to develop a placement resource or facilitate a family connection.
SB144	Foster Care—Kinship Parent Requirements	Lowers, from 21 years to 18 years, the age that a person is designated as a relative caretaker for a child in need of an out-of-home placement

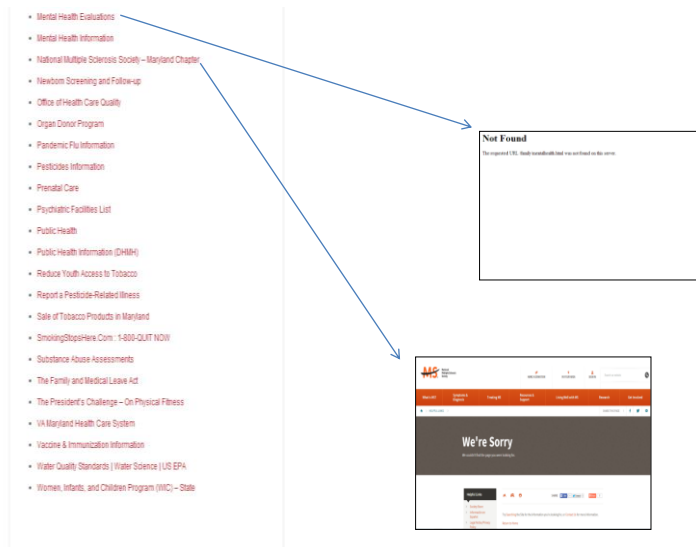
DHR Website

- **Website Links are Non-functional on the DHR Website.** A check of the 'Links' tab on the DHR website, which provides a list of various resources that are in line with DHR services, indicated that several of the links are either not active or are incorrect. The table below highlights these links. DHR stated that they will fix these links immediately.

Non-functioning Links in the Citizens with Disabilities Section of the 'Links' Tab



Non-Functioning Links in the Health and Wellness Section of the 'Links' Tab



Social Services Administration (SSA)

- **Concerns over Survivor and Disability Benefits for Foster Children.** Sen. Jamie Raskin and Del. Kathleen Dumais recently introduced SB0914/ HB1270, a bill prohibiting DHR from using the assets of children in state foster care as reimbursement for state-provided care. Currently, DHR collects benefits

such as disability and parent's Social Security on behalf of participating children and puts that money towards the agency's overall foster care budget. According to the [Baltimore Sun](#), DHR currently collects an average of \$2.5 million benefits per year, on behalf of about 300 children in their care. A recent report also asserted that Maryland could collect as much as \$9.2 million per year if DHR decides to pursue and collect benefits more aggressively.

This practice has been upheld by the Maryland Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court, and is currently practiced by most states. However, in light of the recent bill's introduction, DHR's collection practices have generated [concerns](#) over the ethics of using "individual, earned benefits" to pay for care that the state is already compelled to provide. Secretary Dallas has voiced concerns that the loss in revenue resulting from directing these benefits to individual children would cause cuts to foster care programs throughout Maryland. The Secretary also asserted that creating individual bank accounts or trust funds for eligible children would be costly and require contracting with outside experts to provide appropriate services. DHR, during the Stat, indicated that they have spoken with the sponsors recently on a compromise. DHR wants to follow up more on the concept of kids aging out and how to help them. DHR also indicated that excess money goes into an individual account for the youth but that idea is not being mentioned by those who are against DHR's current protocol.

- **Creating a Special Medicaid Plan for Foster Children.** According to a February 13th article in [Kaiser Health News](#), foster children in the state of Florida have encountered obstacles in terms of receiving health care, including needed mental health services, due to the fact that few providers take Medicaid insurance. Another concern is not being able to take foster children, in different health care plans, to their original health care providers. Florida is combating this problem by creating a special Medicaid plan to closely manage the care of this population; beginning in May 2014. In Florida, like in Maryland, foster children are automatically enrolled in Medicaid. However, the new plan will involve a group called Sunshine Health. Sunshine Health will cover all physical and behavioral health, dental care and other services, with a network of more than 30,000 providers. Care managers will help oversee children's social needs, as well as their health. "It's all integrated," said Sunshine Health CEO Chris Paterson. "If there's a missing piece of health care, say a child is missing a vaccine, the community-based person is going to know that and help us get that child to the doctor." The five-year contract is valued at \$1.1 billion, according to the article. DHR did indicate to StateStat that it is difficult to find medical services for youth in remote areas of the state but services are provided nonetheless. DHR will provide an update on actions that will be taking place in the coming months that will address health care needs for youth in foster care.

Florida Moves To Manage Health Care For Foster Kids

By Marissa Evans

FEB 13, 2014

Chris and Alicia Johnson have 10 kids -- three biological, five adopted out of foster care and two foster children -- all under one roof on the outskirts of Orlando, Fla.

While providing love, support and encouragement for their foster kids, they've sometimes run into roadblocks trying to get them health care, including needed mental health services, because few providers take Medicaid insurance. Another problem? Not being able to take foster children in different health care plans to the same doctors.

Those difficulties are not unusual for the nation's nearly 400,000 foster children, whose health care can be complicated by cycling from one placement to another, undiagnosed childhood trauma and a failure to receive preventive care, according to experts.

Florida is creating a special Medicaid plan to closely manage the care of this population, beginning in May. The plan is designed to cover the estimated 31,600 Florida children in the welfare system, including those in foster care, placed with relatives or in group homes. In the Miami-Dade and Monroe region alone, there are 3,125 children eligible, according to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).

- **DHR Using Benefits Data Trust (BDT) for Medicaid Outreach.** As mentioned previously in the briefing, DHR has working with BDT to connect energy assistance clients to food stamp benefits. This program has been successful in terms of outreach and StateStat recently made an inquiry as to whether or not the same type of program can be used to increase the Medicaid penetration rate. Rosemary Malone from the FIA program at DHR was contacted and she indicated that BDT is working in partnership with the Door to HealthCare (Western Region) and Montgomery County Health and Human Services (Capital Region), to reach out to SNAP enrollees and connecting them to Medicaid services.

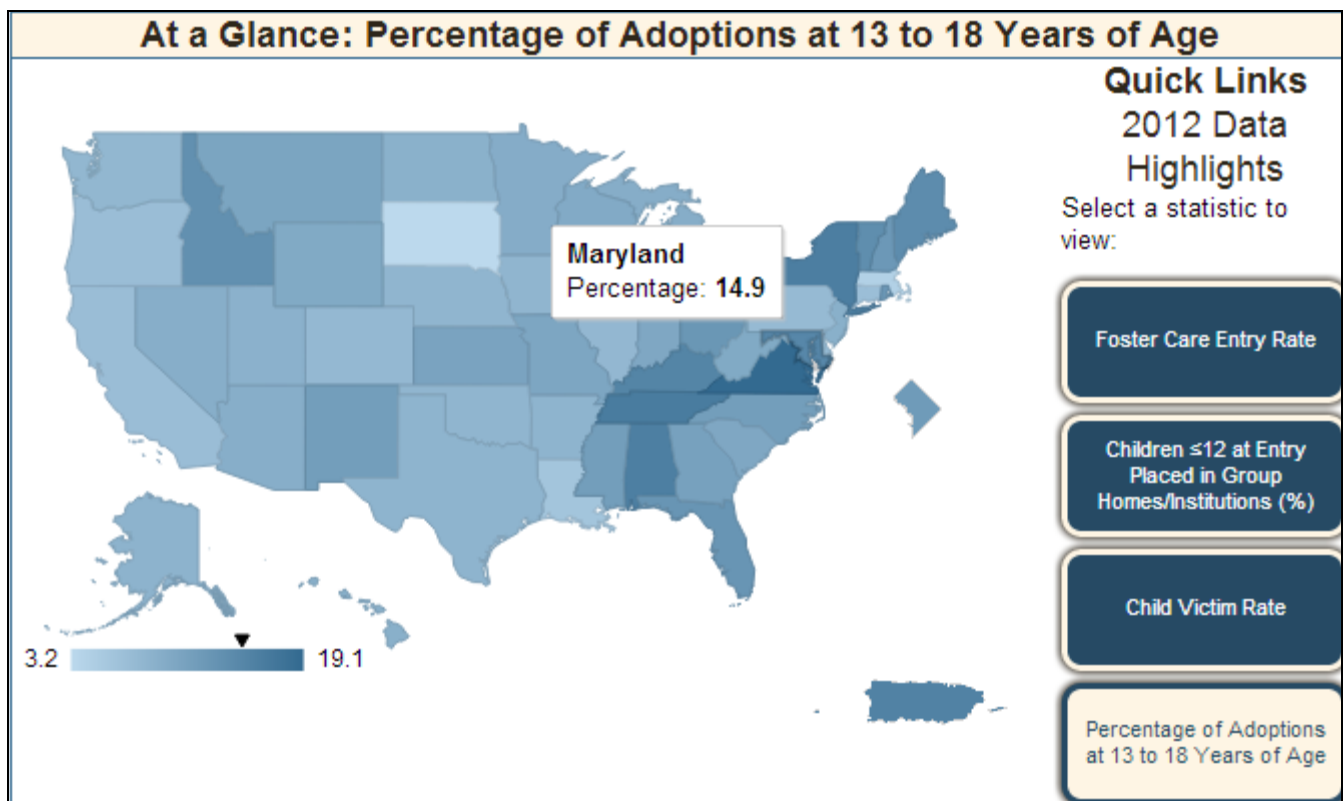
This program began in October 2013 but there are some obstacles in that BDT has not been given permission to directly assist households with enrollment telephonically. BDT is actively working with the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) to conduct enrollment over the phone but BDT estimates that approximately 20 percent of paper applications completed from October – January have not been returned with signatures, and cannot be entered into the internal portal. DHR will let StateStat know about any barriers and the Governor's Office will work to enhance this program and assist in any way possible.

Capital Region	Total Outreach	Total Contacts	Appointments	Applications
October	2500	251	-	27
November	2000	550	57	67
December	0	759	145	3
January	1500	147	14	11
February	5000	447	33	75
Totals:	11,000	2,154	249	183

Western	Total	Total	Appointments	Applications
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Region	Outreach	Contacts		
October	1250	102	-	4
November	1000	283	56	3
December	0	227	74	0
January	1000	17	1	1
February	3500	250	9	35
Totals:	6.750	879	140	43

- How is Maryland Doing When it Comes to Youth Being Adopted Between the Ages of 13 and 18?**
 According to data obtained from the U.S. Department of Human Resources website, in 2012, 14.9 percent of youth who were adopted were between the ages of 13 and 18. In comparison to other states, only New York, Virginia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky have higher rates. It should be noted, though, that youth in this age range are the most difficult to place in terms of adoptions.



- Creating Outcome Measures for Alternative Response (AR).** During the 2012 Legislative Session, the General Assembly passed legislation to join more than 20 states that have adopted an “Alternative Response” for handling certain low-risk reports of abuse and neglect. Alternative Response has allowed DHR to provide services for families with low risk cases without the threat of a formal finding in court. DHR has been rolling out this program in phases for several months and the culmination will be in Baltimore city by July of this year.

As a follow-up item, DHR was asked to provide information and data on outcome measures that will be tracked for Alternative Response. DHR has created a sample report showing the current weekly data indicators tracked by SSA (attached to briefing). However, DHR will not have final measures until more in depth analysis is done of the AR program. DHR reports that, by law, an evaluation of the program has to be done and they will provide a report to the state legislature in October 2014 and 2015. DHR is also working with the Institute of Applied Research (IAR) from St. Louis, Missouri; a company that has evaluated Alternative Response in several states. Currently in the StateStat template, AR is tracked by the metric showing cases that are open longer than 60 days by jurisdiction.

Alternative Response Cases, Open Less Than 60 Days (Goal= 90% or Higher)								
	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-14	Feb-14
State Total	90%	100%	98%	99%	100%	99%	98%	95%
Allegany	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Anne Arundel	90%							100%
Baltimore City	90%							
Baltimore County	90%					100%	99%	91%
Calvert	90%							100%
Caroline	90%							
Carroll	90%					100%	100%	100%
Cecil	90%					100%	100%	100%
Charles	90%							100%
Dorchester	90%							
Frederick	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	98%
Garrett	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	86%
Harford	90%					100%	100%	85%
Howard	90%					100%	100%	100%
Kent	90%							
Montgomery	90%	100%	96%	98%	99%	99%	91%	93%
Prince George's	90%							100%
Queen Anne's	90%							
St. Mary's	90%							100%
Somerset	90%							
Talbot	90%							
Washington	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%	100%	100%
Wicomico	90%							
Worcester	90%							

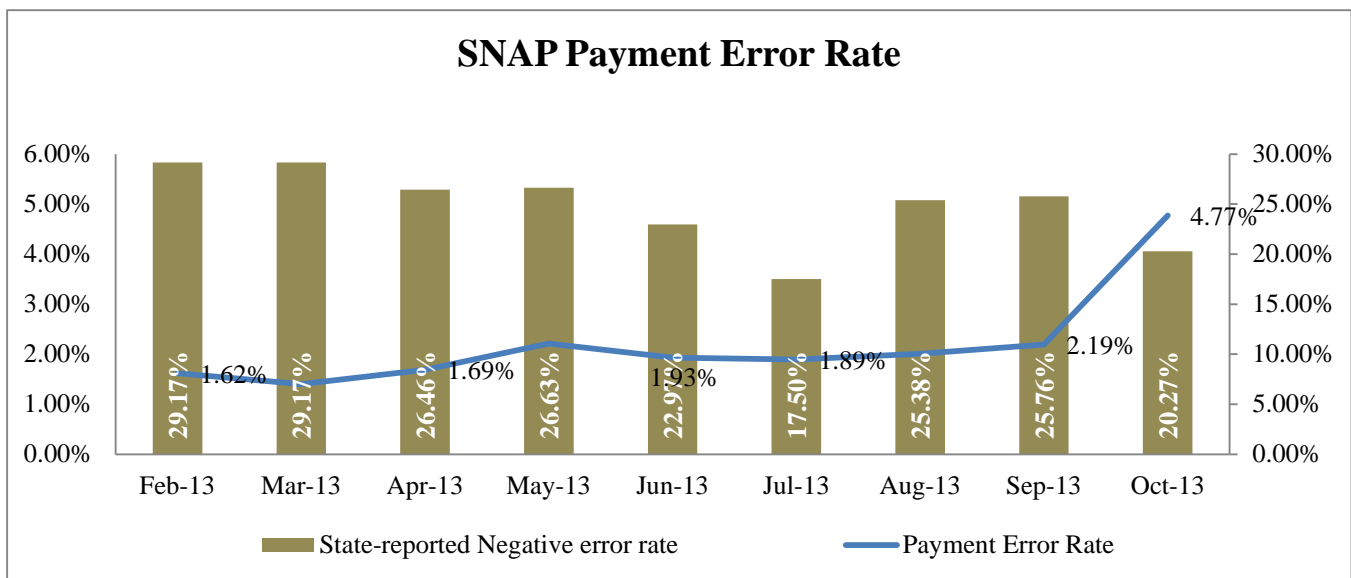
Family Investment Administration (FIA)

- Understanding Why SNAP Payment Error Rates Occur.** The USDA recently recognized Maryland as a top-performing state for the improvements DHR has made to the SNAP Program. In recognition of DHR's hard work, USDA awarded Maryland \$5.2 million in performance bonus payments last June. In 2007 Maryland's food stamp payment error rate, which is the percentage of food stamp benefit dollars issued to a household above the amount for which that household is eligible, was more than three percent. Maryland's error rate spiked during the recession peaking at 8.3 percent in October 2011. DHR worked tirelessly to drive down the error rate. By June 2013, Maryland's food stamp error was driven down to a record low 1.93 percent. Although these efforts allowed for Maryland to be deemed a top performing state in reference to SNAP, recent data shows the error rate is back on the rise.

At the previous Stat, DHR indicated that they are more concerned if the negative error rate increases and that there are six types of errors that contribute to SNAP error rates. The error types are as follows:

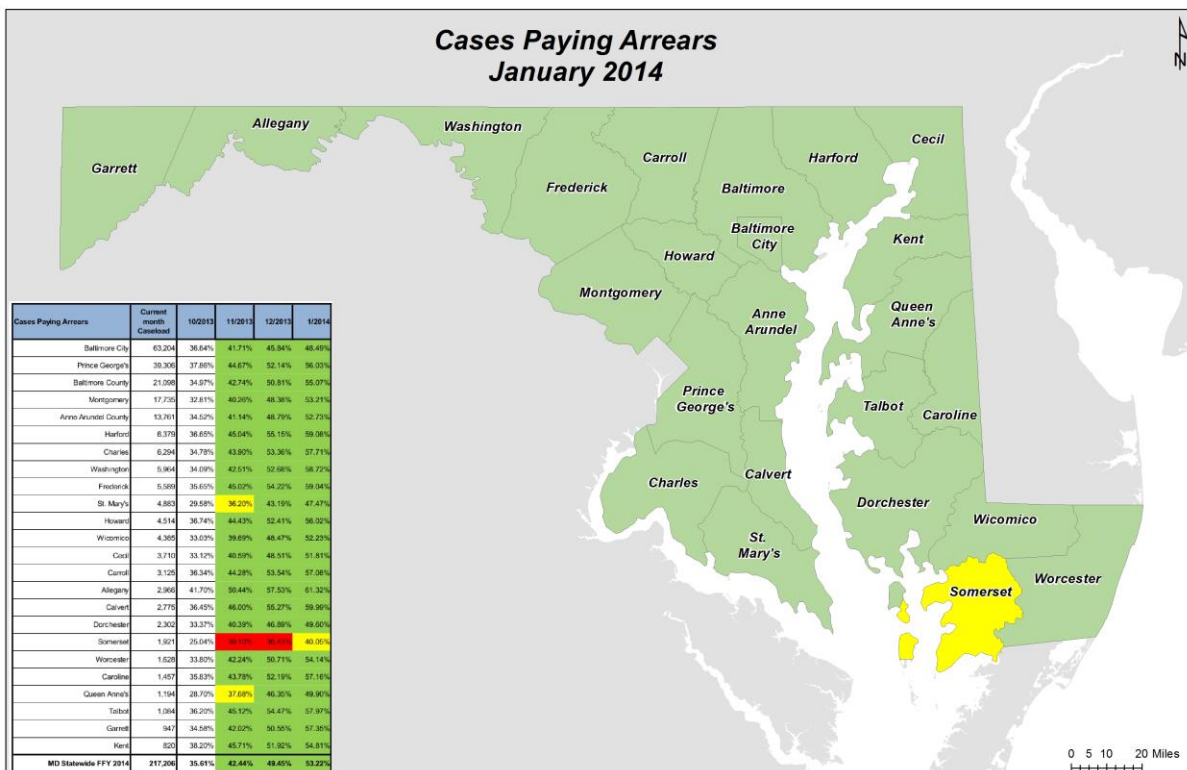
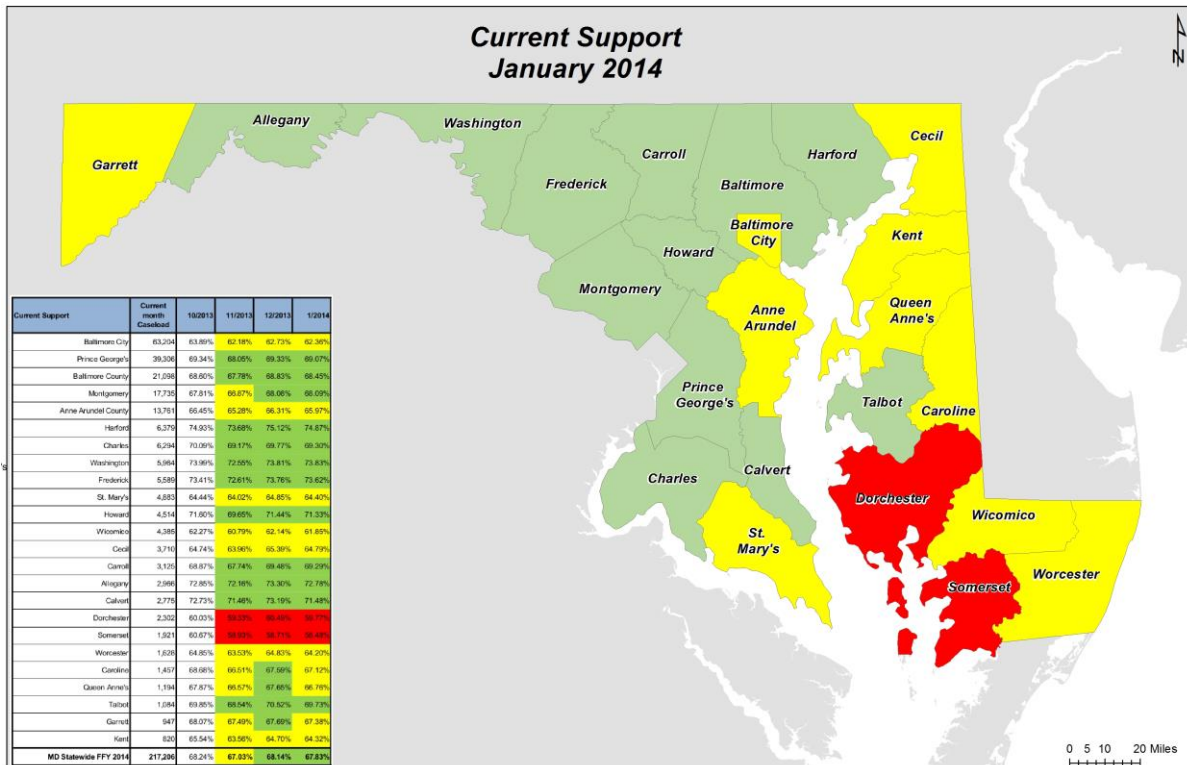
Error Type	Frequency
Wages and Salaries	7
Unemployment Compensation	4
Self Employment	2
SSI and/or State SSI Supplement	2
Student Status	1
Standard Utility Allowance	3

DHR reports that The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires each state to prepare a Sampling Plan, to judge for errors, before the beginning of each fiscal year. Samples are taken from a statewide pool but smaller jurisdictions may not be a part of these samples due to a lack of volume. DHR also indicates that according to a University of Baltimore statistician under contract to DHR, the sample size is statistically valid at the State level, but DHR's monthly sample does not select enough cases each month to yield statistically valid error rate calculations for local departments of district offices.

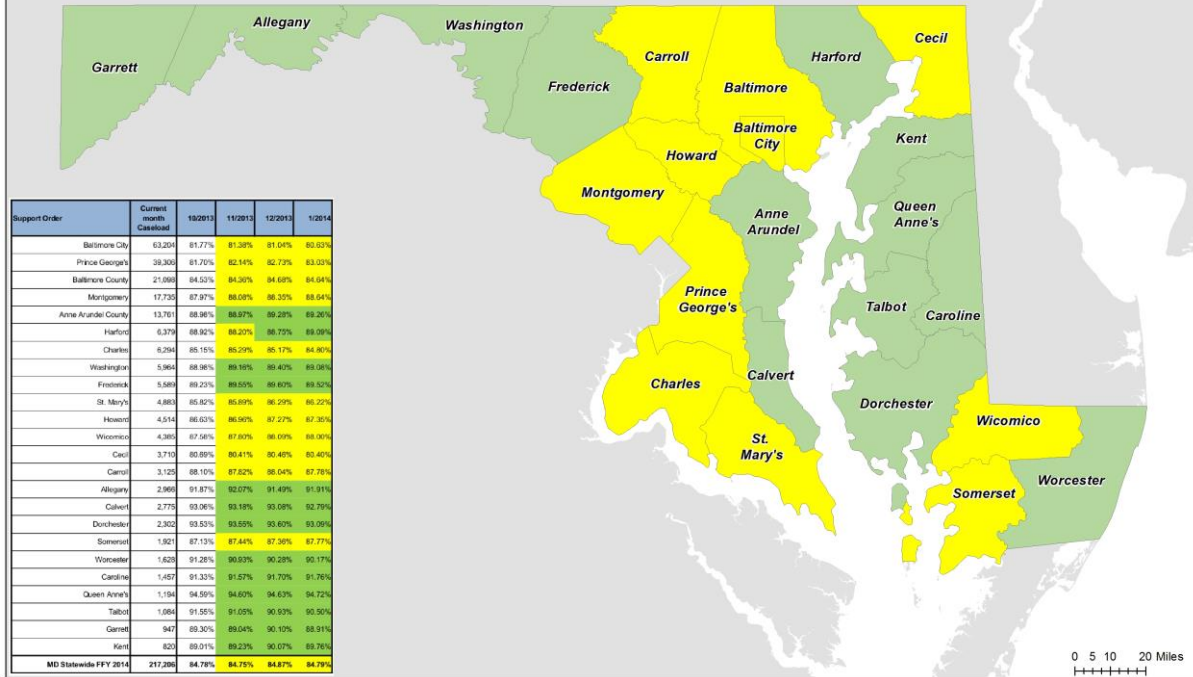


Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA)

- How Local Jurisdictions are Performing in Child Support Collections.** For the year ending September 30, 2013, DHR collected \$549 million on behalf of Maryland children. DHR has been tracking local jurisdictional performance in the StateStat template, which in turn, can be used to improve collections in various counties.



Support Order January 2014



Paternity IV-D January 2014

